

Onizuka **ORBITER**

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Quarterly award winners announced

Winners of Onizuka Air Force Station's quarterly awards were announced Feb. 6: Senior Airman Jennifer H. Fukunaga, Northwest Communications Support Element, Airman of the Quarter; Staff Sgt. Eric B. Storms, NWCSE, Non-commissioned Officer of the Quarter; Capt. William J. Bates, OD-4, Officer of the Quarter; Linda L. Lavigne, 21st

Space Operations Squadron, Civilian of the Quarter, Category I; Giok H. Thung, 21 SOPS, Civilian of the Quarter, Category II; Barry Tolin, MCOM, Contractor of the Quarter; and Todd Schira, Richard Dorris, John Patterson and Chris Gray, MCOM Consolidated Control Center, Contractor Team of the Quarter.

Award sponsors include the Air Force Association (Tennessee Ernie Ford Chapter), Air Force Sergeants' Association, American Business Women's Association, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Golfland, Moffett Naval Exchange, Sunnyvale Chamber of Commerce, and OD-4, NWCSE and 21 SOPS booster clubs.



Lt. Col. Sandra Finan, 21 SOPS commander, stands with award winners, back row from left: Barry Tolin, Todd Schira, Staff Sgt. Jeremy Britt (accepting for Staff Sgt. Eric Storms), Capt. William Bates, Senior Airman Jennifer Fukunaga, Richard Dorris, John Patterson and Chris Gray. Front row: Linda Lavigne and Giok Thung. (photo by Valerie Joseph)



Gumbo Cook-off
Feb. 27 - 11 a.m.
Space Place

Tickets are \$3. See Hattie Jenkins, x3697, Rose Beamer, x4144, Mona Leon-Guerrero, x6118, Sandy Ybarra, x3484, or Arnie Arajuo, x6080.

Your Air Force family needs you

by Lt. Gen. Robert Hinson
AFSPC Vice Commander

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. -- Mark Feb. 24 on your calendars. It's probably one of the most important dates of the year for our Air Force family.

No, it's not a day off. It marks the beginning of the annual Air Force Assistance Fund campaign, which will continue for the next five weeks. It's the one opportunity we have yearly to truly take care of our own Air Force people, whether retired or active duty. In a sense, you're taking care of your own family.

There are four separate charities involved in the AFAF campaign:

-- The Air Force Aid Society. The official charity of the Air Force helps eligible active-duty and retired Air Force members with financial emergencies. Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve members on active duty may also receive assistance. Assistance is provided through grants or interest-free loans for such things as food, rent, utilities and other essential goods and services. The society also sponsors an education grant program and a spouse tuition assistance program overseas.

-- The Air Force Enlisted

Foundation Inc. The home is located in Fort Walton Beach near Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. The foundation provides indigent widows and widowers of retired enlisted people with housing facilities and related services. Those eligible are widows and widowers, 55 and older, whose spouses were retired enlisted persons from the regular Air Force, Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve. The foundation also cares for retired Air Force enlisted members, 62 and older, and their spouses.

-- The Air Force Village Indigent Widow's Fund. The village, located in San Antonio, is a life-care community for retired officers, spouses, widows or widowers and family members. The fund contributes to the support of indigent widows.

-- The General and Mrs. Curtis E. LeMay Foundation. This foundation was established in 1990 to provide free temporary financial assistance to indigent officers' widows. The LeMay Foundation has expanded its scope and now also provides free temporary financial assistance to enlisted widows and widowers.

Last year in Air Force Space Command alone, we received funds

for our people in excess of \$1.3 million. That's money to a financially strapped AFSPC member in an emergency, child care for parents, education grants for spouses and phone calls for deployed members overseas. Worldwide, 34,000 Air Force people were helped by other Air Force people through this program.

Here's something else you might find interesting: Less than a quarter of Air Force members chose to contribute to AFAS last year. I hope to turn that around in this command at least. Given our increased operations tempo, this will be even more important.

It's difficult sometimes to part with money, no matter what the cause. After all, you have to take care of the family you see across the dinner table every night, too. But making sure your Air Force family is taken care of is also important.

Feb. 24 is not a day off, but it is a day you can start making a difference for your Air Force family through your contributions to the Air Force Assistance Fund. Thanks to each of you and all you do to make us the greatest air and space force in the world.

Air Force lithographs

Onizuka's public affairs office has new Air Force lithographs featuring the Centennial of Flight: 1903 - 2003. They are available in Bldg. 1002, room 503.



Worth repeating

"Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much, because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat."

-- President Theodore Roosevelt

Safety first!

Scott Dimig, with Western Window Tinting, applies Mylar to windows in the base's main lobby. The safety film will prevent the windows from shattering in an earthquake.
(photo by Valerie Joseph)



OTSS makes way for state-of-the-art technology

A flip of a switch was all it took to mark the end of the Operational Traffic Switching System Feb. 3 at Onizuka Air Force Station.

Installed in 1994, OTSS connected real-time mission data between the remote tracking stations and various mission control centers and satellite operations centers.

OTSS was made obsolete by the recent integration of the Operational Switch Replacement and Wide Area Network Interface Unit equipment, which allow MCCs and SOC's to connect their own resources without the need for an interface.

According to Ed Glanz, manager of network operations, OSR and WANIU improved reliability and capability to the users making OTSS a "victim of time."

"OTSS served its purpose extremely well," he said, "but we have to stay current."

In addition, Glanz said, the new equipment requires less operator intervention, saving valuable manpower hours.



Lt. Col. Sandra Finan, 21 SOPS commander; Juan Betancourt, resource control systems operator; and Maj. David Rizzo, CWNO director; flip the switch marking the end of the Operational Traffic Switching System. (photo by Valerie Joseph)

The dangers of static electricity while refueling your vehicle

He wasn't smoking. That's what people always assume. The car was turned off. He wasn't using a cellular phone. He took all the usual precautions, but something terrible happened as he filled up his vehicle. It was something he, like most motorists, had no idea was even possible. Simply touching the gas pump nozzle sparked a fire. He stated, "When I got to the pump, I touched it and that's all I can remember. "Boom. I was ignited."

Investigators office concluded caused by static with the fire marshal's the fire was likely electricity. The buildup of static electricity is usually released with a surprising but harmless shock. Most people experience it when they touch the car door during dry, cold weather or grab a doorknob after walking on the carpet.

But a mundane static shock can turn tragic when it occurs near the opening to a vehicle's fuel tank, where there can be an accumulation of gasoline vapors. Given the proper conditions, the spark is enough to ignite a fire.

These rare but troubling and easily avoided incidents have only recently begun to grab the attention of gasoline industry officials, but the public remains almost entirely unaware this can happen.

Signs posted at gas stations warn motorists not to smoke during refueling and to turn off the car engine. There are even warnings about how prolonged exposure to gasoline fumes causes cancer or about using cell phones at the gas pumps. Few gas stations, however, post anything on the dangers of static electricity during vehicle refueling. Perhaps the closest thing is a warning directed at people filling up portable gasoline containers.

It is recommended the container be placed on the ground during refueling.

Fires ignited at gasoline pumps by static electricity can be easily avoided. There are common sense things you can do to correct this hazard. The goal is to avoid generating static electricity during the refueling process and to make sure you have released any static buildup before touching the pump nozzle or anything near the fuel tank opening.

Fires can start when a static spark ignites gasoline fumes gathered near the fuel tank opening. The spark can be generated a number of ways, but the greatest concern comes when a person gives off a static spark.

Following one simple rule should solve most of the problem: *Do not enter your car while refueling.*



That way you won't have a static electric buildup when you sit down in the car. It appears that getting back in the car while refueling appears to be the leading cause of these fires.

Before you handle the pump for the first or last time, make sure you are free of static electricity sparks. You can simply touch a metal part of your car at a point away from the fuel tank opening and the nozzle. You want to be shocked somewhere, just not where there are vapors. If you don't like getting shocked, some experts suggest touching the metal with your knuckles, where there are fewer nerve endings.

Another contributor to the problem is the hold-open clip on the gas nozzles. Some areas don't allow hold-open clips on gas nozzles because of the potential for static electricity sparks.



Fire safety: Put it on "to-do" list

Joseph Guarnera, Onizuka Air Force Station's fire chief, demonstrates using a fire extinguisher during a recent fire protection and disaster preparedness training session. Guarnera discussed building evacuations, evacuation meeting sites and bomb threats, as well as the different types of fires and ratings for fire extinguishers. Training is held monthly; the next session is Feb. 26 at 1 p.m. in the Corona Room. Anyone who works odd shifts or is unable to attend should call the fire protection office at ext. 6553. (photo by Valerie Joseph)

Chief of Staff: 'It's time for a new way of thinking'

WASHINGTON (AFPN) -- Saying "it's time for a new way of thinking," the Air Force's highest-ranking airman says significant change has already begun and more is on the horizon for how the Air Force will "focus on the unique development of every individual."

"We call it Force Development and it applies equally to all of us -- officer, enlisted and civilian -- across all specialties in our Air Force," said Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. John P. Jumper.

The new personnel development concept will "focus on training, education and experience, especially how you are assigned to get that experience," Jumper said. "We intend to open the aperture on what is considered beneficial education and training experience."

For example most officers will no longer be required to have an advanced academic degree in order to be competitive for promotion to lieutenant colonel, the general said.

"Just like many of you, I too spent many hours in night school to earn a master's degree. Why? So I could get promoted," Jumper said.

Today there is a "career path choice" that encourages development of specialists with a deep perspective in a particular area, the general said.

Up until now the focus was on competency skills in a single Air Force specialty code. Career development was often left to chance.

"Day after day you demonstrate that your expertise is our greatest asset, and I truly believe your continued training and development are our wisest investment," he said. "Our goal in implementing our new Force Development construct is to make that investment in all career fields and all ranks more deliberately than we do today."

Your 'eagle eyes' could thwart terrorist attack



'Eagle Eyes' is an Air Force Office of Special Investigations anti-terrorism initiative that edu-

cates Air Force people on typical activities terrorists engage in to plan attacks. Alert your local AFOSI at 650-603-8135 or Security Forces at ext. 3200 if you see any of the following activities:

Surveillance: Recording/monitoring Air Force activities using a camera, taking notes, drawing diagrams, annotating maps, using binoculars.

Elicitation: Attempts to gain information about Air Force operations, capabilities or people by mail, fax, telephone, in person.

Tests of security: Attempts to measure reaction times to security breaches or to penetrate physical security barriers or procedures in order to assess strengths and weaknesses.

Acquiring supplies: Purchasing or stealing explosives, weapons, ammunition, detonators, timers, etc.; acquiring military uniforms, decals, flight manuals, passes, badges or any other controlled items or the equipment to manufacture them.

Suspicious people who seem out of place: People who don't seem to belong in the workplace, neighborhood, business establishment or elsewhere.

Dry run: Putting people into position and moving them around according to a plan without actually committing a terrorist act; includes mapping of routes, timing traffic lights, evaluating flow.

Deploying assets: Positioning people and supplies to commit a terrorist act (the last chance to alert authorities before the act occurs).

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Unit commanders get more control of leave program

by Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez
Air Force Print News

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas -- A recent policy change returns the authority to unit commanders to approve permissive temporary duty and terminal leave of more than 90 days.

The Air Force's current instruction on military leave requires members wanting a combination of permissive TDY and terminal leave of more than 90 days to seek approval at group or wing level. It is that portion of Air Force Instruction 36-3003 that will be modified, said Master Sgt. Donald Taylor, Air Force leave program manager at the Air Force Personnel Center here.

"Instead of pushing approval paperwork up to the wing commander," Taylor said, "this policy change puts that approval authority back down to the unit commander."

Permissive TDY, often granted in conjunction with terminal leave, is leave granted at the discretion of a commander to retiring airman and some separating airmen to look for a new home or job, Taylor said. Terminal leave is simply a period of regular leave that ends on the same

day as a person's separation or retirement date.

The current policy will not actually be reworded to reflect the change.

Instead, Taylor explained, portions of the current instruction will be deleted.

"The leave program has always been the unit commander's responsibility," Taylor said. "By taking those sections out of the AFI, it puts the entire program back on the unit commander where we feel it should be."

The change is necessary because an increasing number of Air Force people are reaching retirement or separation dates with large amounts of accrued leave.

That can happen when individuals are sent on long deployments where taking leave is not possible, Taylor said. They return from such a deployment and expect to take all their leave, along with some permissive TDY, before leaving the military.

However, when airmen accrue significant leave by not taking it as it is given to them, it constitutes a misuse of the benefits Congress has given to servicemembers, he said.

"Congress' intent is for people to use leave as they accrue it," Taylor said. "If you look at the AFI, it highly recommends that everybody take at least a 14-day leave period for rest and relaxation each year. Those other 16 days should be taken intermittently throughout the year as needed. We shouldn't have people with 30 or 60 or 90 days on the books, but we do."

Airmen are normally permitted to have up to 60 days of leave "on the books" at the end of each fiscal year -- Sept. 30. People with more than 60 days of leave accrued typically lose those extra days on Oct. 1.

Exceptions to that policy include people who had been directly supporting contingency operations. In these cases, they may apply for special leave accrual to restore up to 90 days of accrued leave. Any leave approved in excess of 60 days under this program must be taken within three fiscal years.

Another option for people approaching separation or retirement dates with more leave than they will be able to take is to sell back leave, Taylor said. But they may sell only a total of 60 days of leave back to the government during their career.

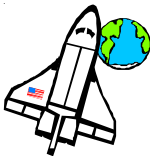


Remembering Columbia's crewmembers

Flowers from neighboring Ariba Inc. arrived at Onizuka Air Force Station Feb. 7 as an expression of condolence for the loss of the crew of Space Shuttle Columbia. A note from Bob Calderoni, president and CEO of Ariba, read in part: "It is with sadness that I now express the condolences of the Ariba family as well as their grief over the tragic loss of the space shuttle crew. It has been exciting to work so near to people who are pioneers and to see you on campus in our cafeteria. Please pass on our condolences to the grieving families whose pride has now turned to sorrow." (photo by Valerie Joseph)

DOD's top space official committed to space discovery

by Master Sgt. Scott Elliott
Air Force Print News



WASHINGTON -- Just days after Space Shuttle Columbia broke apart in the skies over Texas, the Department of Defense's executive agent for space said the nation's program would go on.

"I think we're all (still) reeling and will be for some time," said Peter B. Teets, undersecretary of the Air Force and chief of the National Reconnaissance Office.

According to Teets, the Columbia disaster will force people to alter the way they think about the space program.

"I think everyone recognizes that, essentially, it's a controlled explosion that creates the energy to get you into orbit ... but they've forgotten just what a significant event re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere really is," he said.

"There's a huge amount of energy that has to be taken out of the vehicle as it re-enters the atmosphere -- it's taken out by transferring energy to heat," he said.

Once the root cause of the accident is determined, Teets said, the nation's space agency leaders have to reassess how they operate in space.

Among the considerations the nation's space leaders will have to face is how to resupply the International Space Station and where the manned space program goes from here.

"I'm one who believes it's important for us to have fully reusable launch systems that will be the for-sure way we provide assured access to space," he said. "Perhaps, by working together, we can leverage the same kinds of technology that will allow us to get more operationally responsive systems."

According to the undersecretary, shared technologies, such as a common propulsion system and lightweight structure, could lead to the next generation of manned spacecraft, the space plane.

"The bottom line is that we need to redouble our efforts to make sure we have a vigorous and successful national security space program."

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Most importantly, he added, the new emphasis reflects a sincere approach by the Air Force to ensure airmen have time for other priorities, such as family.

Each person's career development will be managed through professional development teams, officials said. Over the next six months the Air Force will redesign how the Air Force Personnel Center assigns people to schools and jobs. Rather than having assignment officers think about filling vacancies, there will be teams dedicated to "developing" individuals.

First up: Some officers waiting for the fall announcement of Intermediate Service School attendees may get welcomed but unexpected news. Many majors on

the ISS list will focus on packing their bags for traditional courses in Alabama, Rhode Island, Virginia or Kansas. Others, however, will be surprised to find out they are heading for a master's degree program through the Air Force Institute of Technology in Ohio, Naval Post Graduate School in California or the Joint Military Intelligence College in the Washington, D.C., area.

"Our team reviewed every candidate's record and tried to send the right people to the right kind of development course, and not just to the cookie-cutter courses," said Lt. Gen. Richard "Tex" Brown, deputy chief of staff for personnel at the Pentagon. "There are some cases where it just makes more sense, for the officer and for the Air Force, to send

these folks to get a different kind of master's degree than is offered at traditional PME. The new educational opportunities will be considered equally valuable to an officer's professional growth. This is the way of the future."

Jumper said there will not be one "set solution" for success in all cases.

"We will examine each individual based on credibility, depth of experience, breadth of exposure, and potential to serve the Air Force in higher positions of responsibility," the chief of staff said.

Changes affecting how airmen are assigned and other Force Development initiatives will be announced over the next several months, officials said.

Onizuka Orbiter

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21st Space Operations Squadron

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